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MR. FOX'S LETTER
TO THE
ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER.

A
LETTER
FROM THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES JAMES FOX,
TO THE
WORTHY AND INDEPENDENT
ELECTORS
OF THE
CITY and LIBERTY of WESTMINSTER.

DUBLIN:

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L E T T E R, &c.

TO vote in small minorities is a misfortune to which I have been so much accustomed, that I cannot be expected to feel it very acutely.

To be the object of calumny and misrepresentation gives me uneasiness, it is true, but an uneasiness not wholly unmixed with pride and satisfaction, since the experience of all ages and countries teaches that calumny and misrepresentation are frequently the most unequivocal testimonies of the zeal, and possibly the effect, with which he

B

against

against whom they are directed has served the public.

But I am informed that I now labour under a misfortune of a far different nature from these, and which can excite no other sensations than those of concern and humiliation. I am told that you in general disapprove my late conduct, and that, even among those whose partiality to me was most conspicuous, there are many who, when I am attacked upon the present occasion, profess themselves neither able nor willing to defend me.

That your unfavourable opinion of me (if in fact you entertain any such) is owing to misrepresentation, I can have no doubt. To do away the effect of this misrepresentation is the object of this letter, and I know of no mode by which I can accomplish this
object

object at once so fairly, and (as I hope) so effectually, as by stating to you the different motions which I made in the House of Commons in the first days of this session, together with the motives and arguments which induced me to make them.—On the first day I moved the House to substitute, in place of the Address, the following Amendment :

“ To express to his Majesty our most
 “ zealous attachment to the excellent con-
 “ stitution of this free country, our sense
 “ of the invaluable blessings which are de-
 “ rived from it, and our unshaken deter-
 “ mination to maintain and preserve it....
 “ To assure His Majesty, that uniting with
 “ all His Majesty’s faithful subjects in those
 “ sentiments of loyalty to the Throne, and
 “ attachment to the Constitution, we feel in
 “ common with them the deepest anxiety

“ and concern, when we see those measures
 “ adopted by the Executive Government,
 “ which the law authorizes only in cases of
 “ insurrection within this realm.

“ That His Majesty’s faithful Commons,
 “ assembled in a manner new and alarming
 “ to the country, think it their first duty,
 “ and will make it their first business, to
 “ inform themselves of the causes of this
 “ measure, being equally zealous to enforce
 “ a due obedience to the laws on the one
 “ hand, and a faithful execution of them
 “ on the other.”

My motive for this measure was, that
 I thought it highly important, both in a
 constitutional and a prudential view, that
 the House should be thoroughly informed
 of the ground of calling out the militia, and
 of

of its own meeting, before it proceeded upon other business.

The Law enables the King, in certain cases, by the advice of his Privy Council, having previously declared the cause, to call forth the militia—and positively enjoins, that, whenever such a measure is taken, Parliament shall be summoned immediately.

This law, which provided that we should meet, seemed to me to point out to us our duty when met, and to require of us, if not by its letter, yet by a fair interpretation of its spirit, to make it our first business, to examine into the causes, that had been stated in the Proclamation as the motives for exercising an extraordinary power lodged in the Crown for extraordinary occasions; to ascertain whether they were
true

true in fact, and whether, if true, they were of such a nature as to warrant the proceeding that had been grounded on them.

Such a mode of conduct, if right upon general principles, appeared to me peculiarly called for by the circumstances under which we were assembled; and by the ambiguity with which the causes of resorting for the first time to this prerogative were stated and defended.

The insurrections (it was said) at Yarmouth, Shields, and other places, gave Ministers a legal right to act; and the general state of the country, independently of these insurrections, made it expedient for them to avail themselves of this right. In other words, insurrection was the *pretext*, the general state of the country the *cause* of the measure.

sure. Yet insurrection was the motive stated in the Proclamation; and the Act of Parliament enjoins the disclosure, not of the pretext, but of the cause: so that it appeared to be doubtful whether even the letter of the law had been obeyed; but if it had, to this mode of professing one motive and acting upon another, however agreeable to the habits of some men, I thought it my duty to dissuade the House of Commons from giving any sanction or countenance whatever.

In a prudential view, surely information ought to precede judgment; and we were bound to know what really was the state of the country, before we delivered our opinion of it in the Address. Whenever the House is called upon to declare an opinion of this nature, the weight which ought to belong to such a declaration, makes it highly
important

important that it should be founded on the most authentic information, and that it should be clear and distinct. Did the House mean to approve the measure taken by Administration, upon the ground of the public pretence of insurrections? If so, they were bound to have before them the facts relative to those insurrections, to the production of which no objection could be stated. Did they mean by their Address to declare that the general situation of the country was in itself a justification of what had been done? Upon this supposition, it appeared to me equally necessary for them so to inform themselves, as to enable them to state with precision to the public the circumstances in this situation to which they particularly adverted. If they saw reason to fear impending tumults and insurrections, of which the danger was imminent and pressing, the measures of His Majesty's

jeſty's Miniſters might be well enough adapted to ſuch an exigency; but ſurely the evidence of ſuch a danger was capable of being ſubmitted either to the Houſe or to a Secret Committee; and of its exiſtence without ſuch evidence, no man could think it becoming for ſuch a body as the Houſe of Commons to declare their belief.

If therefore the Addreſs was to be founded upon either of the ſuppoſitions above ſtated, a previous enquiry was abſolutely neceſſary. But there were ſome whoſe apprehenſions were directed not ſo much to any inſurrections, either actually exiſting or immediately impending, as to the progreſs of what are called French opinions, propagated (as is ſuppoſed) with induſtry, and encouraged by ſucceſs; and to the miſchiefs which might in future time ariſe from the ſpirit of diſobedience and diſorder, which theſe doctrines are calculated to inſpire.

This danger, they said, was too notorious to require proof; its reality could better be ascertained by the separate observations of individual members, than by any proceeding which the House could institute in its collective capacity; and upon this ground, therefore, the Address might be safely voted, without any previous enquiry.

To have laid any ground for approving without examination, was a great point gained for those who wished to applaud the conduct of Administration; but in this instance I fear the foundation has been laid, without due regard to the nature of the superstructure, which it is intended to support; for, if the danger consist in false but seducing theories, and our apprehensions be concerning what such theories may in process of time produce, to such an evil it is difficult to conceive how any of the measures which have been pursued are in any degree

gree applicable. Opinions must have taken the shape of overt acts, before they can be resisted by the fortifications in the Tower; and the sudden embodying of the Militia, and the drawing of the regular troops to the capital, seem to me measures calculated to meet an immediate, not a distant mischief.

Impressed with these ideas I could no more vote upon this last vague reason, than upon those of a more definite nature; since, if in one case the premises wanted proof, in the other, where proof was said to be superfluous, the conclusion was not just. If the majority of the House thought differently from me, and if this last ground of general apprehension of future evils (the only one of all that were stated, upon which it could with any colour of reason be pretended that evidence was not both practicable and necessary), appeared to them to

justify the measures of Government ; then I say they ought to have declared explicitly the true meaning of their vote, and either to have disclaimed distinctly any belief in those impending tumults and insurrections, which had filled the minds of so many thousands of our fellow subjects with the most anxious apprehensions ; or to have commenced an inquiry concerning them, the result of which would have enabled the House to lay before the public a true and authentic state of the nation, to put us upon our guard against real perils, and to dissipate chimerical alarms.

I am aware that there were some persons who thought that to be upon our guard was so much our first interest, in the present posture of affairs, that even to conceal the truth was less mischievous than to diminish the public terror. They dreaded inquiry, lest it should produce light ; they
felt

felt so strongly the advantage of obscurity in inspiring terror, that they overlooked its other property of causing real peril. They were so alive to the dangers belonging to false security, that they were insensible to those arising from groundless alarms.—In this frame of mind they might for a moment forget that integrity and sincerity ought ever to be the characteristic virtues of a British House of Commons; and while they were compelled to admit that the House could not, without inquiry, profess its belief of dangers, which (if true) might be substantiated by evidence, they might nevertheless be unwilling that the salutary alarm (for such they deemed it) arising from these supposed dangers in the minds of the people, should be wholly quieted. What they did not themselves credit, they might wish to be believed by others. Dangers, which they considered as distant,

they

they were not displeased that the public should suppose near, in order to excite more vigorous exertions.

To these systems of crooked policy and pious fraud I have always entertained a kind of instinctive and invincible repugnance; and, if I had nothing else to advance in defence of my conduct but this feeling, of which I cannot divest myself, I should be far from fearing your displeasure. But are there, in truth, no evils in a false alarm, besides the disgrace attending those who are concerned in propagating it? Is it nothing to destroy peace, harmony and confidence, among all ranks of citizens? Is it nothing to give a general credit and countenance to suspicions, which every man may point as his worst passions incline him? In such a state, all political animosities are inflamed. We confound the mistaken speculatist with the desperate incendiary. We extend the prejudices which we have conceived against

individuals to the political party or even to the religious sect of which they are members. In this spirit a Judge declared from the bench, in the last century, that poisoning was a Popish trick, and I should not be surprised if Bishops were now to preach from the pulpit that sedition is a Presbyterian or a Unitarian vice. Those who differ from us in their ideas of the constitution, in this paroxysm of alarm we consider as confederated to destroy it. Forbearance and toleration have no place in our minds; for who can tolerate opinions, which, according to what the Deluders teach, and rage and fear incline the Deluded to believe, attack our Lives, our Properties, and our Religion?

This situation I thought it my duty, if possible, to avert, by promoting an inquiry. By this measure the guilty, if such there are, would have been detected, and the innocent liberated from suspicion.

My

My propofal was rejected by a great majority. I defer with all due respect to their opinion, but retain my own.

My next motion was for the insertion of the following words into the Address:---
 “Trusting that your Majesty will employ
 “every means of negotiation, consistent
 “with the honour and safety of this coun-
 “try, to avert the calamities of war.”

My motive in this instance is too obvious to require explanation; and I think it the less necessary to dwell much on this subject, because, with respect to the desirableness of peace at all times, and more particularly in the present, I have reason to believe that your sentiments do not differ from mine. If we looked to the country where the cause of war was said principally to originate, the situation of the United Provinces appeared to me to furnish abundance of prudential argu-

arguments in favour of peace. If we looked to Ireland, I saw nothing there that would not discourage a wise statesman from putting the connection between the two kingdoms to any unnecessary hazard. At home, if it be true that there are seeds of discontent, War is the hot-bed in which these seeds will soonest vegetate; and of all wars, in this point of view, that war is most to be dreaded, in the cause of which Kings may be supposed to be more concerned than their subjects.

I wished, therefore, most earnestly for peace; and experience had taught me, that the voice even of a Minority in the House of Commons, might not be wholly without effect, in deterring the King's Ministers from irrational projects of war. Even upon this occasion, if I had been more supported, I am persuaded our chance of preserving the blessings of peace would be better than it appears to be at present.

D

I come

I come now to my third motion,
 “ That an humble address be presented
 “ to his Majesty, that his Majesty will be
 “ graciously pleased to give directions, that
 “ a Minister may be sent to Paris, to treat
 “ with those persons who exercise provi-
 “ sionally the functions of executive go-
 “ vernment in France, touching such points
 “ as may be in discussion between his Ma-
 “ jesty, and his Allies, and the French Na-
 “ tion ;” which, if I am rightly informed,
 is that which has been most generally dis-
 approved. It was made upon mature con-
 sideration, after much deliberation with
 myself, and much consultation with others ;
 and notwithstanding the various misrepresen-
 tations of my motives in making it, and
 the misconceptions of its tendency, which
 have prepossessed many against it, I cannot
 repent of an act, which, if I had omitted,
 I should think myself deficient in the duty
 2 which

which I owe to you, and to my country at large.

The motives which urged me to make it were, the same desire of peace which actuated me in the former motion, if it could be preserved on honourable and safe terms, and if this were impossible, an anxious wish that the grounds of war might be just, clear, and intelligible.

If we or our ally have suffered injury or insult, or if the independence of Europe be menaced by inordinate and successful ambition, I know no means of preserving peace but by obtaining reparation for the injury, satisfaction for the insult, or security against the design, which we apprehend; and I know no means of obtaining

any of these objects but by addressing ourselves to the power of whom we complain.

If the exclusive navigation of the Scheld, or any other right belonging to the States General, has been invaded, the French Executive Council are the invaders, and of them we must ask redress. If the rights of neutral nations have been attacked by the decree of the 19th of November, the National Convention of France have attacked them, and from that Convention, through the organ by which they speak to foreign courts and nations, their Minister for foreign affairs, we must demand explanation, disavowal, or such other satisfaction as the case may require. If the manner in which the same Convention have received and answered some of our countrymen,

men, who have addressed them, be thought worthy notice, precisely of the same persons, and in the same manner, must we demand satisfaction upon that head also. If the security of Europe, by any conquests made or apprehended, be endangered to such a degree, as to warrant us, on the principles as well of justice as of policy, to enforce by arms a restitution of conquests already made, or a renunciation of such as may have been projected, from the Executive Power of France, in this instance again, must we ask such restitution, or such renunciation. How all, or any of these objects could be attained, but by negotiation, carried on by authorised Ministers, I could not conceive. I knew indeed that there were some persons, whose notions of dignity were far different from mine, and who, in that point of view, would have preferred a clandestine, to an avowed nego-

nego-

negociation; but I confess I thought this mode of proceeding neither honourable nor safe; and, with regard to some of our complaints, wholly impracticable.—Not honourable, because, to seek private and circuitous channels of communication, seems to suit the conduct, rather of such as sue for a favour, than of a great nation, which demands satisfaction. Not safe, because neither a declaration from an unauthorised agent, nor a mere gratuitous repeal of the decrees complained of, (and what more could such a negociation aim at?) would afford us any security against the revival of the claims which we oppose; and lastly, impracticable with respect to that part of the question, which regards the security of Europe, because such security could not be provided for by the repeal of a decree, or any thing that might be the result of a private negociation, but could only be obtained

tained by a formal treaty, to which the existing French government must of necessity be a party; and I know of no means by which it can become a party to such a treaty, or to any treaty at all, but by a Minister publicly authorised, and publicly received. Upon these grounds, and with these views, as a sincere friend to peace, I thought it my duty to suggest, what appeared to me, on every supposition, the most eligible, and, if certain points were to be insisted upon, the only means of preserving that invaluable blessing.

But I had still a further motive; and if peace could not be preserved, I considered the measure which I recommended as highly useful in another point of view. To declare war, is, by the Constitution, the prerogative of the King; but to grant

or with-hold the means of carrying it on, is (by the same Constitution) the privilege of the People, through their Representatives; and upon the People at large, by a law paramount to all Constitutions—the Law of Nature and Necessity, must fall the burdens and sufferings, which are the too sure attendants upon that calamity. It seems therefore reasonable that they, who are to pay, and to suffer, should be distinctly informed of the object for which war is made, and I conceived nothing would tend to this information so much as an avowed negociation; because from the result of such a negociation, and by no other means, could we, with any degree of certainty, learn, how far the French were willing to satisfy us in all, or any of the points, which have been publicly held forth as the grounds of complaint against them.—If in none of these

these any satisfactory explanation were given, we should all admit, provided our original grounds of complaint were just, that the war would be so too:—if in some—we should know the specific subjects upon which satisfaction was refused, and have an opportunity of judging whether or not they were a rational ground of dispute:—if in all—and a rupture were nevertheless to take place, we should know that the public pretences were not the real causes of the war.

In the last case which I have put, I should hope there is too much spirit in the people of Great Britain, to submit to take a part in a proceeding founded on deceit; and in either of the others, whether our cause were weak or strong, we should at all events escape that last of infamies, the suspicion of being a party to the Duke of

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Brunswick's

Brunswick's Manifestoes *. But this is not all. Having ascertained the precise cause of war, we should learn the true road to peace; and if the cause so ascertained appeared adequate, then we should look for peace through war, by vigorous exertions and liberal supplies: if inadequate, the Con-

* I have heard that the Manifestoes are not to be considered as the acts of the Illustrious Prince whose name I have mentioned, and that the threats contained in them were never meant to be carried into execution. I hear with great satisfaction whatever tends to palliate the Manifestoes themselves; and with still more any thing that tends to disconnect them from the name which is affixed to them, because the great abilities of the person in question, his extraordinary gallantry, and above all his mild and paternal government of his subjects, have long since impressed me with the highest respect for his character; and upon this account it gave me much concern when I heard that he was engaged in an enterprize, where, according to my ideas, true glory could not be acquired.

stitution

stitution would furnish us abundance of means, as well through our representatives, as by our undoubted right to petition King and Parliament, of impressing his Majesty's Ministers with sentiments similar to our own, and of engaging them to compromise, or, if necessary, to relinquish an object, in which we did not feel interest sufficient to compensate to us for the calamities and hazard of a war.

To these reasonings it appeared to me, that they only could object with consistency, who would go to war with France on account of her internal concerns; and who would consider the re-establishment of the old, or at least some other form of government, as the fair object of the contest. Such persons might reasonably enough argue, that with those whom they are determined to destroy, it is useless to treat.

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To arguments of this nature, however, I paid little attention ; because the eccentric opinion upon which they are founded was expressly disavowed, both in the King's Speech and in the Addresses of the two Houses of Parliament : and it was an additional motive with me for making my motion, that, if fairly debated, it might be the occasion of bringing into free discussion that opinion, and of separating more distinctly those who maintained and acted upon it from others, who from different motives (whatever they might be) were disinclined to my proposal.

But if the objections of the violent party appeared to me extravagant, those of the more moderate seemed wholly unintelligible. Would they make and continue war, till they can force France to a counter-revolution ? No ; this they disclaim. What then is to be the termination

mination of the war to which they would excite us? I answer confidently, that it can be no other than a negotiation, upon the same principles and with the same men as that which I recommend. I say the same principles, because after war peace cannot be obtained but by treaty, and treaty necessarily implies the independency of the contracting parties. I say the same men, because though they *may* be changed before the happy hour of reconciliation arrives, yet that change, upon the principles above stated, would be merely accidental, and in no wise a necessary preliminary to peace : for I cannot suppose that they who disclaim making war *for* a change, would yet think it right to continue it *till* a change; or, in other words, that the blood and treasure of this country should be expended in a hope that—not our efforts—but time and chance may produce a new government in France, with which it would be

be more agreeable to our Ministers to negotiate than with the present. And it is further to be observed, that the necessity of such a negotiation will not in any degree depend upon the success of our arms, since the reciprocal recognition of the independency of contracting parties is equally necessary to those who exact and to those who offer sacrifices for the purpose of peace. I forbear to put the case of ill success, because to contemplate the situation to which we, and especially our ally, might in such an event be placed, is a task too painful to be undertaken but in a case of the last necessity. Let us suppose therefore the skill and gallantry of our sailors and soldiers to be crowned with a series of uninterrupted victories, and those victories to lead us to the legitimate object of a just war, a safe and honourable peace. The terms of such a peace, (I am supposing that Great Britain
is

is to dictate them) may consist in satisfaction, restitution, or even by way of indemnity to us or to others, in cession of territory on the part of France. Now that such satisfaction may be honourable, it must be made by an avowed Minister; that such restitution or cession may be safe or honourable, they must be made by an independent power, competent to make them. And thus our very successes and victories will necessarily lead us to that measure of negotiation and recognition, which, from the distorted shape in which passion and prejudice represent objects to the mind of man, has by some been considered as an act of humiliation and abasement.

I have reason to believe there are some who think my motion unexceptionable enough in itself, but ill-timed. The time was not in my choice. I had no opportunity

nity of making it sooner; and, with a view, to its operation respecting peace, I could not delay it. To me, who think that public intercourse with France, except during actual war, ought always to subsist, the first occasion that presented itself, after the interruption of that intercourse, seemed of course the proper moment for pressing its renewal. But let us examine the objections upon this head of Time in detail. They appeared to me to be principally Four——

1st. That by sending a Minister to Paris at that period, we should give some countenance to a proceeding*, most unanimously,
and

* Since this was written, we have learned the sad catastrophe of the proceeding to which I alluded.—Those, however, who feel the force of my argument, will perceive that it is not at all impaired by this revolting act of cruelty and injustice. Indeed if I were inclined to see any connection between the two subjects, I should rather feel additional regret for the rejection
of

and most justly reprobated, in every country of Europe.

To this objection I need not, I think, give any other answer, than that it rests upon an opinion, that by sending a Minister we pay some compliment, implying approbation, to the prince or state to whom we send him; an opinion which, for the honour of this country, I must hope to be wholly erroneous. We had a Minister at Versailles, when Corsica was bought and enslaved. We had Ministers at the German courts, at the time of the infamous partition of Poland. We have generally a resident Consul, who acts as a Minister to the piratical republic of Algiers; and we have more than once sent

of a motion which might have afforded one chance more of preventing an act concerning which (out of France) I will venture to affirm that there is not throughout Europe one dissentient voice

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embassies to Emperors of Morocco, reeking from the blood through which, by the murder of their nearest relations, they had waded to their thrones. In none of these instances was any sanction given by Great Britain to the transactions by which power had been acquired, or to the manner in which it had been exercised.

2dly. That a recognition might more properly take place at the end, and as the result of a private communication, and (in the phrase used upon a former occasion) as the price of peace, than gratuitously at the outset of a negotiation.

I cannot help suspecting, that they who urge this objection have confounded the present case with the question, formerly so much agitated, of American Independence. In this view they appear to me wholly dissimilar

similar—I pray to God that, in all other respects, they may prove equally so. To recognize the Thirteen States, was in effect to withdraw a claim of our own, and it might fairly enough be argued that we were entitled to some price or compensation for such a sacrifice. Even upon that occasion, I was of opinion that a gratuitous and preliminary acknowledgment of their independence was most consonant to the principles of magnanimity and policy; but in this instance we have no sacrifice to make, for we have no claim; and the reasons for which the French must wish an avowed and official intercourse, can be only such as apply equally to the mutual interest of both nations, by affording more effectual means of preventing misunderstandings, and securing peace.

I would further recommend to those who

press this objection, to consider whether, if recognition be really a sacrifice on our part, the Ministry have not already made that sacrifice by continuing to act upon the commercial treaty as a treaty still in force. Every contract must be at an end when the contracting parties have no longer any existence either in their own persons or by their representatives. After the tenth of August the political existence of Louis XVI. who was the contracting party in the treaty of commerce, was completely annihilated. The only question therefore is, Whether the Executive Council of France did or did not represent the political power so annihilated. If we say they did not, the contracting party has no longer any political existence either in his person or by representation, and the treaty becomes null and void. If we say they did, then we have actually acknowledged them as representatives, (for the time at least) of what

what was the Executive Government in France. In this character alone do they claim to be acknowledged, since their very style describes them as a Provisional Executive Council and nothing else. If we would preserve our treaty we could not do less ; by sending a Minister we should not do more *.

3dly. That our ambassador having been recalled, and no British Minister having resided at Paris, while the conduct of the

* If my argument is satisfactory, I have proved that we have recognized the Executive Council ; and it is notorious, that through the medium of Mr. Chauvelin we have negotiated with them. But although we have both negotiated and recognized, it would be dishonourable, it seems, to negotiate in such a manner as to imply recognition. How nice are the points upon which great businesses turn ! how remote from vulgar apprehension !

French

French was inoffensive with respect to us and our ally, it would be mortifying to send one thither, just at the time when they began to give us cause of complaint.

Mortifying to whom? Not certainly to the House of Commons, who were not a party to the recall of Lord Gower, and who, if my advice were followed, would lose no time in replacing him. To the Ministers possibly*; and if so, it ought to be a warning to the House, that it should not, by acting like the Ministers, lose the proper, that is, the first opportunity, and thereby throw ex-

* I do not think it would have been mortifying even to them, because in consequence of the discussions which had arisen, a measure which had been before indifferent might become expedient; but as this point made no part of my consideration, I have not thought it incumbent upon me to argue it.

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trinsic difficulties of its own creation in the way of a measure, in itself wise and salutary.

4thly. That by acting in the manner proposed we might give ground of offence to those powers, with whom, in case of war, it might be prudent to form connection and alliance.

This objection requires examination. Is it meant that our treating with France in its present state will offend the German Powers, by shewing them that our ground of quarrel is different from theirs? If this be so, and if we adhere to the principles which we have publicly stated, I am afraid we must either offend or deceive, and in such an alternative I trust the option is not difficult.

If it be said, that, though our original grounds of quarrel were different, yet we
may

may, in return for the aid they may afford us in obtaining our objects, assist them in theirs of a counter-revolution, and enter into an offensive alliance for that purpose—I answer, that our having previously treated would be no impediment to such a measure. But if it were, I freely confess that this consideration would have no influence with me; because such an alliance, for such a purpose, I conceive to be the greatest calamity that can befall the British nation: for let us not attempt to deceive ourselves; whatever possibility or even probability there may be of a counter-revolution, from internal agitation and discord, the means of producing such an event by external force, can be no other than the conquest of France. The conquest of France !!!—O! calumniated crusaders, how rational and moderate were your objects —O! much injured Louis XIV. upon what slight grounds have you

you been accused of restless and immoderate ambition!—O! tame and feeble Cervantes, with what a timid pencil and faint colours have you painted the portrait of a disordered imagination!

I have now stated to you fully, and I trust fairly, the arguments that persuaded me to the course of conduct which I have pursued. In these consists my defence, upon which you are to pronounce; and I hope I shall not be thought presumptuous, when I say, that I expect with confidence a favourable verdict.

If the reasonings which I have adduced fail of convincing you, I confess indeed that I shall be disappointed, because to my understanding they appear to have more of irrefragable demonstration than can often be hoped for in political discussions; but even

in this case, if you see in them probability sufficient to induce you to believe that, though not strong enough to convince *you*, they, and not any sinister or oblique motives, did in fact actuate *me*, I have still gained my cause; for in this supposition, though the propriety of my conduct may be doubted, the rectitude of my intentions must be admitted.

Knowing therefore the justice and candour of the tribunal to which I have appealed, I wait your decision without fear—Your approbation I anxiously desire, but your acquittal I confidently expect.

Pitied for my supposed misconduct by some of my friends, openly renounced by others, attacked and misrepresented by my enemies,—to you I have recourse for refuge and protection; and conscious, that if I had
shrunk

shrunk from my duty, I should have merited your censure, I feel myself equally certain, that by acting in conformity to the motives which I have explained to you, I can in no degree have forfeited the esteem of the city of Westminster, which it has so long been the first pride of my life to enjoy, and which it shall be my constant endeavour to preserve.

C. J. FOX.

South Street, Jan. 26, 1793.

